Creating Original Artwork for the Junior Duck Stamp Program

As a participant in the Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Contest, you will create your vision of the colorful, winged waterfowl that grace wetlands across North America. To do this, you'll study these beautiful creatures, reviewing pictures, images, or video. Perhaps you'll even have the opportunity to observe wildlife in their natural habitat at a national wildlife refuge, a park in your community, or your own backyard.

Artist Integrity

The objective of the contest is that you will create your own depiction of waterfowl and submit that original creation as your Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest entry. Original artwork is an important aspect of this contest. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service encourages all students who participate in the Junior Duck Stamp Contest to complete the Reference Form on page 18.

All students in grades 7-12 must submit the reference worksheet along with your entry. Do not attach the reference worksheet to your artwork, but include it in the envelope with your entry, or give it to your teacher to send along with your artwork. Students in grade groups I and II are encouraged to work with their teacher or parent to complete the Reference Form, but are not required to submit it with their entry.

Use of References

Visual Reference
2004 Federal Duck Stamp

Improper Use of Reference
This illustration would be disqualified.

This is an improper use of the reference. This is a nearly identical copy of the 2004 Federal Duck Stamp and would be disqualified.

Proper Use of Reference
This illustration could be entered.

Both by Dominic Dropnik / USFWS

This is a proper use of the reference. Study the differences between the stamp and this drawing. The snow goose is featured in a different flight angle. Additional features in the stamp, such as the lighthouse, have been omitted. What other differences do you see?

Artistic Reference Form

You should explore your own sense of creativity while producing your original wildlife artwork. The Reference Form is where you will record the images, books, or objects you studied to create your original artwork.

When filling in Your Reference Form

- Include as much information as possible (see examples below).
- Reference all major sources.
- For students in grades 7-12, you must include this reference sheet with your entry or your entry will be disqualified.

Reference Examples

Published References:
Must include full name of author, photographer or editor; title of the publication and page number(s). Example: Mueller, Keith. Waterfowl Concepts. Pages 6, 32, 54, 112.

References Not Found in a Book:
Such as personal observations or photographs: must include full name of observer or photographer, species, date, and location. Example: Herman, Amber, Mallards, Mississippi River, Davenport, Iowa, May 2007.

Images from the Internet:
Must include photographer or artist's full name, and full website address. Example: Sevcik, Jan, www.naturephoto-cz.com/photos/sevcik/mallard—anas-platyrhyncos-5.jpg
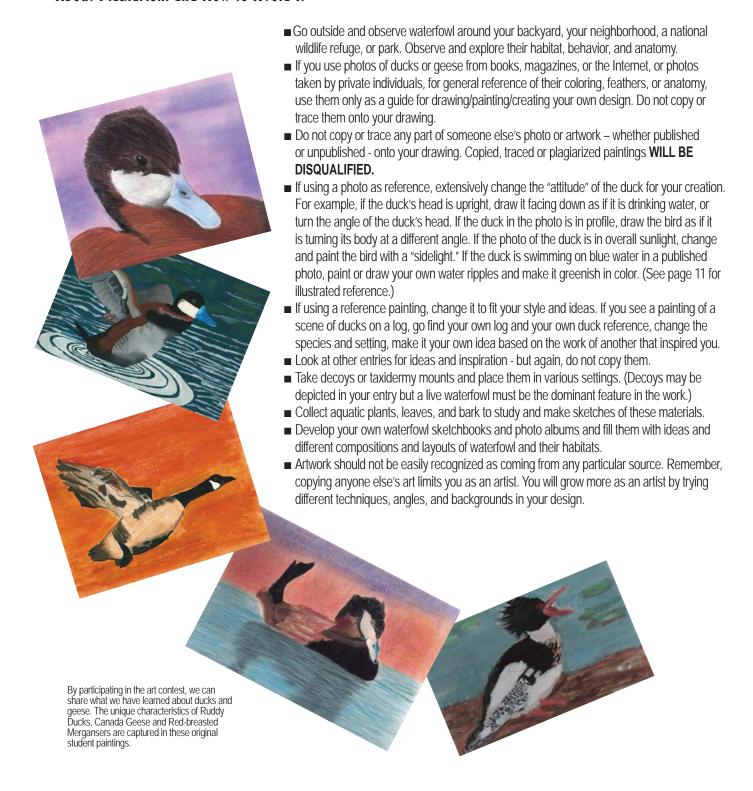
Other Sources:
Provide as much identifying information as possible.

Using decoys as reference material, this young artist can match colors and wing patterns for his entry.
USFWS/Becky Wolff

About Plagiarism and How to Avoid It

- Go outside and observe waterfowl around your backyard, your neighborhood, a national wildlife refuge, or park. Observe and explore their habitat, behavior, and anatomy.
- If you use photos of ducks or geese from books, magazines, or the Internet, or photos taken by private individuals, for general reference of their coloring, feathers, or anatomy, use them only as a guide for drawing/painting/creating your own design. Do not copy or trace them onto your drawing.
- Do not copy or trace any part of someone else's photo or artwork – whether published or unpublished - onto your drawing. Copied, traced or plagiarized paintings **WILL BE DISQUALIFIED.**
- If using a photo as reference, extensively change the "attitude" of the duck for your creation. For example, if the duck's head is upright, draw it facing down as if it is drinking water, or turn the angle of the duck's head. If the duck in the photo is in profile, draw the bird as if it is turning its body at a different angle. If the photo of the duck is in overall sunlight, change and paint the bird with a "sidelight." If the duck is swimming on blue water in a published photo, paint or draw your own water ripples and make it greenish in color. (See page 11 for illustrated reference.)
- If using a reference painting, change it to fit your style and ideas. If you see a painting of a scene of ducks on a log, go find your own log and your own duck reference, change the species and setting, make it your own idea based on the work of another that inspired you.
- Look at other entries for ideas and inspiration - but again, do not copy them.
- Take decoys or taxidermy mounts and place them in various settings. (Decoys may be depicted in your entry but a live waterfowl must be the dominant feature in the work.)
- Collect aquatic plants, leaves, and bark to study and make sketches of these materials.
- Develop your own waterfowl sketchbooks and photo albums and fill them with ideas and different compositions and layouts of waterfowl and their habitats.
- Artwork should not be easily recognized as coming from any particular source. Remember, copying anyone else's art limits you as an artist. You will grow more as an artist by trying different techniques, angles, and backgrounds in your design.

By participating in the art contest, we can share what we have learned about ducks and geese. The unique characteristics of Ruddy Ducks, Canada Geese and Red-breasted Mergansers are captured in these original student paintings.

Make it original. Make it your own!

Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Contest Reference Form

All students are encouraged to submit this reference sheet along with their entry to the Junior Duck Stamp Contest.

All students in grade III and IV are required to submit this form.

For California: Reference Forms must be received by March 18, 2016 for Groups 3 & 4 or entry is disqualified.

Grade Group (check one)

☐ Group I
Grades K-3

☐ Group II
Grades 4-6

☐ Group III
Grades 7-9

☐ Group IV
Grades 10-12

"Google image" will not be accepted-- please write an exact web address

Student Information (Please print clearly)

_____   _____
First Name   Last Name

Reference Information

While creating your Junior Duck Stamp Contest entry, you likely reviewed many sources.
Please include your major sources in the space below. See page 13 for information on how to format reference listings.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____